

Snake bites and your pet

Armed with curiosity and natural hunting instincts it is not uncommon for our favourite four legged friends to cross paths with a snake. At this time of year, even city dogs and cats can have these encounters in local parks particularly those near bodies of water such as lakes and beaches.

As snakes are generally inactive during cold weather, bites usually occur in the warmer months. Australia has a large number of venomous snakes but the black snake and brown snake account for the majority of snake bites in cats & dogs around Liverpool.

Signs of Snake bite

Several factors will determine what sort of reaction your pet has to a snake bite. The type of snake (some snakes are more venomous than others), the amount of venom injected (depends of the size and maturity of the snake) and the site of the snake bite are all contributing factors.

Dogs and cats are most often bitten around the head and limbs. Usually the closer the bite is to the heart the quicker the venom will be absorbed into the pet's system and distributed around the body.

At the beginning of Spring, when snakes first become active, their venom glands tend to be fuller and their bites at this time are much more severe.

The usual signs of snake bite by a tiger or brown snake are:

- Sudden weakness followed by collapse.
- Shaking or twitching of the muscles.
- Vomiting.
- Dilated pupils not responsive to light.
- In the later stages paralysis occurs. Your pet may also have blood in their urine.

First Aid

If you suspect your pet has been bitten by a snake you should immobilise your pet and try to keep him/her as quiet as possible. It is vital that you take your pet to a veterinarian as quickly as possible. Phone ahead. The sooner your pet is treated, the better is their chance of survival.